

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Approved For Release 2000/06/01 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000200100001-1

~~SECRET~~

NOFORN

Nº 168

GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE REPORT

NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN



CIA/RR-G-21

March 1958

DOCUMENT NO. 1
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S ©
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1989
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE 29 Nov 79 REVIEWER: 008514

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

208604/2

NOFORN

~~SECRET~~

Approved For Release 2000/06/01 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000200100001-1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WARNING

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, USC, Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~SECRET~~
CONFIDENTIAL

GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE REPORT

NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

CIA/RR-G-21

March 1958

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Research and Reports

CONFIDENTIAL

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~ CONFIDENTIAL

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Summary	1
I. Introduction	3
II. Physical Background	3
A. Nature of the Border	3
B. Terrain and Vegetation	4
1. The High Rugged Country of the East	4
a. The Wakhan Corridor	4
b. Ishkashim to Taliqan	12
c. Drainage	12
2. Low Hills and Plains Between Kunduz and Daulatabad	14
3. Foothills of the Northwestern Margins of the Band-i-Turkestan and Paropamisus Range	16
C. Roads	18
D. Climate	20
III. The People	20
A. General Characteristics of the Population	20
B. Ethnic Groups	25
1. Kirghiz	25
2. Tajiks	25
3. Uzbeks	26
4. Turkmen	26
5. Hazaras	27
6. Chahar Aimak	27
7. Pathans	27

~~SECRET~~ CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

	<u>Page</u>
C. Soviet Penetration	28
IV. Economic Activity	28
A. General	28
B. Agriculture	29
C. Livestock	29
D. Processing	29
E. Changes in the Economic Scene	30

Appendixes

Gaps in Intelligence	33
Source References	35

Plate

Figure 1. USSR-Afghanistan Boundary Markers. following page	4
---	---

Photographs

Figure 2. Looking northwest across part of the Little Pamir .	6
Figure 3. A shaky bridge of logs crossing the Shor River . .	9
Figure 4. Looking southwest from the south bank of the Āb-i-Wākhān	10
Figure 5. Looking west-northwest down the Āb-i-Wākhān . . .	10
Figure 6. An unusually wide section of the Āb-i-Panja . . .	11
Figure 7. Looking due west down the Āb-i-Panja	13
Figure 8. Looking east along the Afghan ring road	15
Figure 9. A sandy trail through desert-edge vegetation north of Shibarghan	15
Figure 10. A part of the Afghan ring road	17
Figure 11. The main road from Herāt to Qala Nau	17

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
- ii -

~~C T C-R-E-T~~

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

CONFIDENTIAL

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 12. The poor state of repair of most roads	19
Figure 13. Extreme aridity is the rule in the low plains of northwestern Afghanistan	21
Figure 14. November snow cover	21
Figure 15. A rugged Tajik	23
Figure 16. A street in Faizābād	24
Figure 17. Main street in Mazār-i-Sharīf	24
Figure 18. With one exception, all of this group at Tala Barfaq are Tajiks	26
Figure 19. Yaks being milked at a temporary Kirghiz camp .	28
Figure 20. Soviet-built oil tank farm at Herāt, 1955 . . .	30

Maps

Following page

Afghanistan: Wakhan Corridor (13327)	36
Uzbek S.S.R.-Tadzhik S.S.R.-Afghan Border (13685)	36
Afghanistan: Terrain and Transportation (10944-Second Revision)	36

CONFIDENTIAL

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~SECRET~~NORTHERN AFGHANISTANSummary

Northern Afghanistan is a target for penetration by the USSR. Along its entire northern border Afghanistan has a common frontier with the USSR. Soviet penetration into the western and central part of the border area is relatively easy because of close ethnic ties between peoples both sides of the border, particularly among the numerically predominant Uzbeks. From Iran westward, for about two-thirds of its entire length the border crosses bleak, dry, sandy plains or runs along the somewhat sluggish Amu Darya (Ab-i-Panja) river. The eastern third of the border goes through extremely rugged, almost inaccessible high mountains. Immediately south of the border, northern Afghanistan includes (1) the sparsely populated uplands that lie north of the Paropamisus Range and the Hindu Kush in the west; (2) the virtually uninhabited high mountains and pamir of the Wakhan Corridor in the east; and (3) a little-known intermediate area in the big bend of the Ab-i-Panja. Northern Afghanistan is essentially a dry, windy region -- a transitional zone between the true desert of Iran and the high, cold steppe-desert of Tadzhik SSR. The northern half of the ring road, which encircles the central mountain mass of Afghanistan, provides almost the only vehicular traffic route in the area. Trails connect isolated settlements and lead to high passes but, by western standards, they are not good.

The population of northern Afghanistan, a total of 2 to 3 million, varies considerably in ethnic origin. Most of the people, however, are peasants, including the riverine-village and oasis farmers of the west, chiefly Uzbek and Turkmen, and the Tajik and Kirghiz nomads of the Wakhan Corridor. They are largely illiterate, and most seem to be disinterested in propaganda from either the central government in Kabul or the USSR. Some, however -- notably the Uzbeks -- will probably cooperate with the Soviets. The influx of technicians into Afghanistan since 1954 has aided the spread of Soviet influence.

Almost all of the people of Afghanistan are engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. Although some cotton and opium are exported, most crops are consumed locally. Karakul skins are also exported -- chiefly to the USSR. Recently, the slow progress of industrial development in Afghanistan has been accelerated by foreign financial and technical aid, which in the case of the Soviet Union has been a means of strengthening its hold on Northern Afghanistan.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~~~SECRET~~

S-E-C-R-E-T

Stepped-up Soviet interest in this northern region was demonstrated in the petroleum exploration agreement signed in January 1958. This program reportedly calls for 470 Soviet Bloc technicians. The cost of materials and equipment is to be advanced in addition to the credit previously extended by the USSR to Afghanistan.

- 2 -

Pages 3 thru 13 approved for use
by Dept. of State for unclassified
publication 18 Mar 82

~~SECRET~~

I. Introduction

Northern Afghanistan, a region once denied to the Tsars and later to the Soviets, is to be a target in the campaign to expand Soviet influence in Asia. Soviet pressure has effectively prevented American ground observation within the region, and the Afghan Government has prohibited American aerial photography of the area.

It is assumed that aerial photography of this region has been or soon will be flown by the USSR. An American firm has already photographed southern Afghanistan for the Afghan Government, and has negotiated for permission to provide coverage for gaps that exist between the Soviet photography and the American. 1/ If the Soviets are able to obtain the American photography, they will possess complete coverage of Afghanistan.

This study presents to the reader a subject known to the Soviets in great detail -- the regional geography of Afghanistan north of the Hindu Kush.

II. Physical Background

A. Nature of the Border

For the first hundred miles west of China the northern border of Afghanistan runs over land -- largely mountain ridges and peaks -- as far as an island near the eastern end of Sar-i-köl (Lake Victoria: 73°47'E). Westward beyond this point, it follows an east-west course through the center of Lake Victoria, continues down the Pamir River, which begins at Lake Victoria, and along the Ab-i-Wakhān and Ab-i-Panja (Amu Darya downstream from about 69°20'E) River to Kham-i-Āb, the northwesternmost riverine village in Afghanistan, about halfway between Kelif and Kerki, USSR. At this point the boundary leaves the Amu Darya and runs in general southwestward, almost entirely over land, and about a mile and a half north of Zulfiqar, reaches the north-flowing Hari Rud, which here forms the boundary with Iran. In the extreme east the Wakhan Corridor is so narrow -- 8 to 40 miles -- that all of it falls within the scope of this report. Its southern and eastern boundary with China, Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan follows a line of very high mountain ridges and passes and is not otherwise clearly defined, except for a few stone cairns (see Map 10944).

The portion of the boundary between the Amu Darya and Iran, some 400 miles, was originally marked by 79 survey stations, approximately 1 every 10 kilometers; but the nature, size and appearance of such stations is not known. However, each was

~~SECRET~~

S-E-C-R-E-T

marked at least by pillars, as in Figure 1. Two large pillars were placed 5 meters apart, equidistant from the boundary, and a much smaller pillar was set on a line between them -- directly on the boundary line. Such a set of 3 pillars is also said to be located every 2-1/2 kilometers, making 3 sets of pillars between stations. Where the boundary is determined by a watercourse, 2 boundary pillars are erected on the land on opposite sides of the watercourse, 1 pillar within the territory of each country. Pairs of pillars, marked as in Figure 1, are erected at intervals of 2-1/2 kilometers. The actual boundary designated is the center of the deepest part of the channel; but in upper reaches, where there is no navigation and a "deepest channel" is of little significance, the actual boundary is the midpoint of the stream. In all, 1,192 islands in the Amu Darya, (Ab-i-Panja) and Pamir Rivers are numbered and are allocated to either USSR or Afghanistan, in most cases by determining the deepest part of the channel. 2/

The markers and stations here mentioned are believed to have been installed or possibly reexamined and recorded by the Joint Soviet-Afghan Border Commission in 1947-48. No work 3/ was done by this commission on the 100 miles of land boundary east of Lake Victoria, the 12 boundary pillars previously established there having been considered adequate for so remote an area. A protocol 4/ of the agreement that established the mixed boundary commission on 13 June 1946 is available, but copies of the maps made by the commission (122 sheets at 1:50,000) are probably held only by Moscow and Kabul; certainly they are not available in the United States. Likewise the commission's detailed description of the boundary, as provided for in the agreement, is not available. To date the Afghans have given the United States only a "cleansed version" of the boundary demarcation maps, the reliability of which is unknown.

B. Terrain and Vegetation

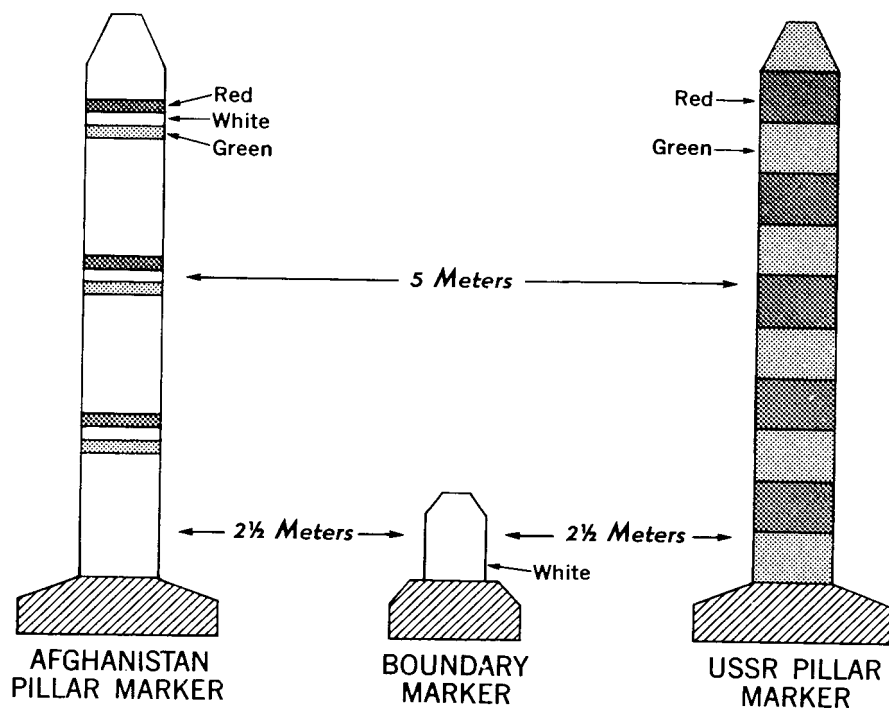
1. The High Rugged Country of the East

a. The Wakhan Corridor

The Wakhan Corridor is generally thought of as extending from the Afghan village of Ishkashim at its lower or western end to the Wakhjir Pass (Wakhjir Dawan) at the Chinese border on the east. At the eastern end the border is divided by a westward salient of Chinese territory -- one segment continuing to the northeast and the other to the southeast. Consequently, Afghan territory actually extends east of Wakhjir Pass on the north and on the south (see Maps 13327 and 13685). From Ishkashim to the easternmost point of Afghanistan is 185 airline miles, whereas the distance to the Wakhjir Pass is only 165 miles. The Corridor is widest (40 miles) in the middle,

S-E-C-R-E-T

SECRET



USSR—AFGHANISTAN BOUNDARY MARKERS

Center marker and distances apply to a land boundary only. A watercourse boundary is marked by placing the two large pillars on opposite banks.

Figure 1

SECRET

S-E-C-R-E-T

where it includes the Nicholas Range, and narrowest in the western third of its extent, where width ranges from 8 to 15 miles except at the headwaters of the north-flowing Ishtrāgh River (71°49'E) where the width reaches 18 miles. At the western entrance, the Corridor is 11 miles wide.

The country is extremely rugged. The mountains are young, as mountains go, and have not been rounded off by erosion; conversely little silt and rock material has been deposited in the valleys. Only the largest valleys have floodplains of even moderate proportions; the rest are V-shaped and are occupied by fast streams or rushing torrents. In past millenia, however, glaciation of the "mountain" type has been extensive -- probably not covering all the land mass but certainly filling and scouring the valleys and making much of their lower walls nearly vertical. As the rivers of ice diminished and were replaced by rivers of water, the larger valleys were partly filled with silt, rock rubble, and glacial boulders and now approximate plains in appearance because the streams do not have volume enough to scour deep channels. Such a flat valley floor, with its wandering stream, characteristically has a partial cover of grass and glacial boulders, may contain a chain of shallow lakes in peaty soil, and may be miles wide and dozens of miles long. It is called a "pamir" (Figure 2).*

There is no travel by wheeled vehicles in the Wakhan Corridor. All transportation is by foot or horse, and east of Nurss the imperturbable yak is also a beast of burden. The term "trail" as applied in the Corridor and also in much of the rest of Badakshan does not necessarily imply a visible path where others have obviously walked. At its minimum significance, the trail may be only a way or access route along which it is possible to scramble with pack animals.

The Wakhjīr Pass in the southeast prong of the Corridor provides access between Wakhan Pamir on the west and Taghdumbash Pamir, which extends east and north into China. The flat floors of both pamirs end some 10 miles from the pass, and the intervening 20-mile stretch through the pass is rough. The northeast prong of the Corridor is occupied by the Little Pamir, 1 to 4 miles wide, which extends first

*The term "Pamirs," used in the plural and usually capitalized, refers in general to the high mountain area of central Asia, covering parts of China, USSR, and Afghanistan. In the USSR the terms Eastern Pamir and Western Pamir are used for two regions, not political subdivisions, within Gorno-Badakhshanskaya Autonomous Oblast.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

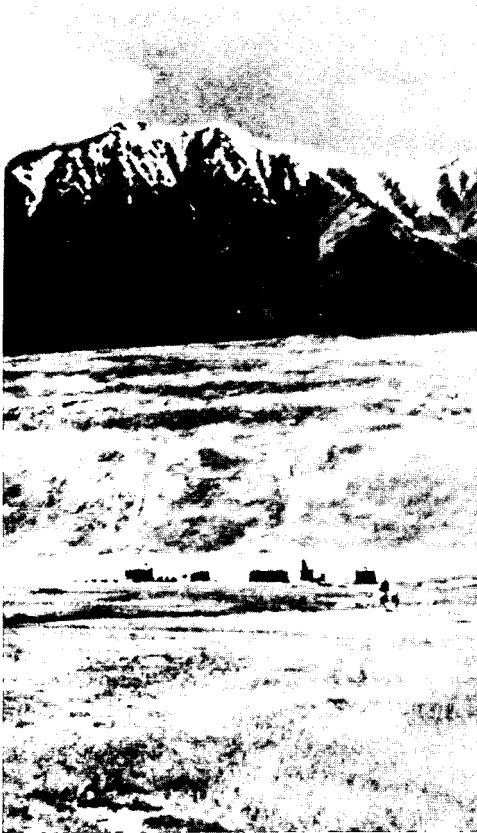


Figure 2. Looking northwest across part of the Little Pamir at Bozai Gumbaz, $37^{\circ}07'N-74^{\circ}01'E$. The buildings are tombs. A rider on horseback could cross the steeply-sloping "terrace", but not the peaks in the distance.

northeastward and then north in the valley of the $\bar{A}q$ Su River as far as Ak-Tash in USSR, and southwestward to Bozai Gumbaz ($74^{\circ}E$) in Afghanistan. Within the pamir, Chakmaktin Kol and the string of small shallow lakes northeast of it constitute an indefinite drainage divide between the $\bar{A}q$ Su River, flowing northeastward, and the Little Pamir River, which flows southwestward through the southwestern end of the Little Pamir. Most of the water is believed to flow down the $\bar{A}q$ Su.

East of the latitude of Langar ($73^{\circ}47'E$), the Corridor consists of only the drainage basins mentioned above and, except for the $\bar{A}q$ Su valley, is bounded by high ridges. This area is nearly the Roof of the World -- peaks and passes range from 16,000 to 20,000 feet above sea level; Chakmaktin Kol is more than 13,000 feet; the $\bar{A}b-i-Wakh\bar{a}n$ begins as melt water from a permanent glacier 5 miles south of Wakhjir Pass; and bare rock or shale is exposed on the hillsides, which are barren of any significant vegetation. Even the moist pamirs have no trees, but their bunch grass is valuable as forage for pack animals.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

All travel is through the lowlands; in some places excess water is a problem, as in the lower 10 miles of the Wakhan Pamir (between Wakhjir village and Bozai Gumbaz).

In the southeast prong of the Corridor, about halfway between Wakhjir Pass and Bozai Gumbaz, it is apparently possible to turn south up watercourses and cross the border at Delhi Sang Pass, elevation 20,000 feet. Much of the trail is over permanent snowfields. From here southeastward the steep and slippery descent into Hunza continues through Kalam Darchi to Misgar at 10,000 feet, where a telegraph line connects the former princely state of Hunza with the rest of India-Pakistan. The principal route from the Corridor to Hunza, however, is more roundabout -- eastward through the Wakhjir Pass to the head of the Taghdumbash Pamir, then southward through the Kilik Pass (Kilik Dawan) or the Mintaka Pass to Kalam Darchi. Some 10 miles east of Langar, a side trail takes off to the south and connects with a network of trails leading, as does the trail over Delhi Sang Pass, to Hunza and to Gilgit in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. On the eastern route, west of Delhi Sang Pass, is the Irshad Uwin Pass (16,300 feet), which is in reality two passes less than a mile apart that provide alternate trails for 4 or 5 miles. Farther west and nearer Langar are the Khora Bhurt (15,200 feet) and Qalander Uwin (19,390 feet) Passes. They are open to men on foot only (no ponies) and only for a few weeks in spring and autumn.

Trails also lead northward out of the northeast prong of the Corridor, cross the drainage divide via high passes such as the Andamin (Andamin Dawan) and Urta-bel' (Pereval Urta-bel'), and lead down into the Great Pamir east of Lake Victoria. Some 20 miles northeast of Bozai Gumbaz the Andamin Stream (Andamin Jilga) enters from the northwest into the confused drainage pattern of the water divide (the Aq Su headwaters). Apparently, it is possible to proceed up the Andamin Stream and its western tributary, skirting Salisbury Peak (about 19,000 feet) along its eastern and northern slopes, and then cross the border into the USSR at Andamin Pass (15,130 feet). A little lake at the crest has outlets to both north and south. From here northward and eastward the route follows another Andamin Stream (Andamin Su) and the Istyk River, eventually reaching the north-flowing Aq Su at Takhtamysh 25 miles north of Kyzyl-Rabat. Some 8 miles east of the confluence of the Andamin Jilga and Aq Su Rivers, 28 miles east of Bozai Gumbaz, a short steep trail swings northward to Urta-bel' Pass (about 14,100 feet) and then down to the Istyk River route.

West of the latitude of Langar the southern boundary of the Corridor continues to follow high ridge lines, as it does to the east, but the northern boundary follows watercourses. Between Langar and Qala Wust the Corridor reaches its greatest width, including the

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Nicholas Range, a practically unexplored mountain mass with an east-northeast--west-southwest ridge. The ridge is highest near the eastern end and apparently slopes down gradually to the west. About 3 miles east of this unnamed high point is Waram Pass, through which runs a trail from Langar to Lake Victoria on the USSR border.

While some travelers have gone through the Great Pamir both east and west of Lake Victoria, probably without encountering difficult terrain, most travelers in the Corridor have been en route between Afghanistan and China or India and have therefore used the Wakhan Pamir. On this tortuous Ab-i-Wakhān route the nearly barren valley walls rise steeply to the north and south, permitting very little floodplain development. In places, there is insufficient room near the river for a footpath, which must therefore cut back into the mountains, as between Qala Panja and Qala Wust. East of Sarhad-i-Wakhān, the route leaves the river to climb the Daliz Pass; halfway between Sarhad-i-Wakhān and Langar it not only leaves the river but has been built onto -- not into -- the hillside with brush and stones. The bridge over the Shor River (Shor Jilga; 73°35'E) is a shaky one-horse structure (Figure 3) that could be sent to the bottom of the small gorge by one good push. Apparently Sarhad-i-Wakhān occupies a strategic position on a south-facing slope above the steep river bank, and there is no way of circumventing it -- the trail from the west (Figure 4) crosses to the north bank at Nurss a mile or two west of Sarhad-i-Wakhān; to the east the trail rises steeply above the north bank (Figure 5); and the trail from the south crosses the river directly to Sarhad-i-Wakhān.

Baroghil Pass is the lowest crossing point in the mountain chain that defines the south rim of the Corridor, not only in the Langar-Qala Panja sector but also for the entire Corridor. On maps and in reports its elevation is quoted as 12,480 feet above sea level, which makes it only 1,500 feet above Sarhad-i-Wakhān. The trail over the pass leads in general due south from Sarhad-i-Wakhān, crossing the Ab-i-Wakhān about a mile east of its confluence with the north-flowing Warsing River (Ab-i-Warsing); it then cuts southwest to, and up, the Warsing River valley. As an alternate route the Ab-i-Wakhān can be crossed west of the confluence, and the broad marshy lower Warsing valley can be followed for 3 miles before the gentle rise begins. The crest of the mountains lies about 10 airline miles from Sarhad-i-Wakhān and consists of a nearly level expanse of grass and loose stone some 600 yards wide. Through Baroghil Pass sheep move southwestward to be bartered for sugar, tea, and cloth from the Chitral Agency. For travelers from Sarhad-i-Wakhān bound due south of Darkot and Yasin, another alternate route branches southeastward off the Baroghil route about halfway up to the ridge, and tops the ridge at Darwāzo Pass (Darwāzo Ān; 12,730 feet), some 4 miles east of the Baroghil.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



Figure 3. A shaky bridge of logs paved with stones and twigs crossing the Shor River at approximately 37°00'N-73°35'E.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



Figure 4. Looking southwest from the south bank of the Ab-i-Wakhān a few miles west of Nurss. The riders are headed downstream, well above the river that flows in the gorge below. The nameless peak (22,500 feet) in the distance is in Pakistan.



Figure 5. Looking west-northwest down the Ab-i-Wakhān and the western slopes of Daliz Pass from $36^{\circ}58'30''\text{N}$ - $73^{\circ}28'30''\text{E}$, just east of Sarhad-i-Wakhān. At the base of the hill in the right middle distance is the village of Sarhad-i-Wakhān. The two foremost animals are yaks.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Between Sarhad-i-Wākhān and Qala Panja, 3 other passes are also used (see Map 13327) -- the Kān Khūn (16,300), Ochhili (17,350), and Phur Nisini (17,200) -- all of which lead to Chitral. Although the Phur Nisini is easier than the Anoshāh Pass (Kach Pass) to the west or the Ochhili to the east, it is suitable only for men with light loads and not for animals.

The lower Corridor, from Qala Panja to Ishkāshīm, differs markedly from the rough, cut-up country to the east. There is still a mountain wall to the north and one to the south, but the drop between the 2 villages that are some 65 miles apart is only 550 feet (from 9,050 to 8,500 feet); and the flat floodplain ranging from a few yards to a mile in width makes traveling easy all the way (Figure 6). But in



Figure 6. An unusually wide section of the Āb-i-Panja floodplain in the lower Corridor. The view was taken looking north-northeast in midafternoon, late August, about 40 miles east of Ishkāshīm and 7 miles east of Urgand. The 23,000-foot peak in the distance is in the USSR and appears to the traveler to be the highest peak for dozens of miles.

this part of the Corridor, where mountains rise 10,000 to 15,000 feet above the trail, travelers can get the impression of being "in a box." They are in the same "box" with the Russians, however, since Russian Ishkashim is just across the Āb-i-Panja from Afghan Ishkāshīm; the Russian road on the north side perforce follows the river, as does the Afghan trail; and, at Afghan settlements such as Shikarf, Russian sentries may be only 200 yards away. In this sector the southern wall can be crossed in 3 places: the Anoshāh Pass, 14 airline miles

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

south of Pagui; the Kotgāz, 11 miles south of Shikarf; and the Ishtrāgh, some 15 miles south of Ishtrāgh. West of the Corridor mouth, 6 other passes can be approached from Zebak.

b. Ishkashīm to Tālīqān

Practically no information is available on the country in the big bend of the Āb-i-Panja north of the Zebak-Tālīqān road other than that which can be read from the inaccurate maps of the area.* Certainly it is wild and rugged country, much of it between 9,000 and 15,000 feet (see Map 13685). Most of the slopes are too steep and the precipitation is too scanty to permit more than occasional scrubby tree growth. The usual vertical zonation of vegetation is observable -- with trees at the lowest and wettest elevations, thick grass on the pamirs and sparse grass on the moister slopes, scattered alpine-type vegetation on the slopes above them, and a nearly barren zone just below the snow line. Probably this area has even less non-local travel than the Corridor. All travel east of the Rustāk-Samti road and north of Faizābād is by foot or horse. The central mountain mass, however, makes it easier to follow the encircling Āb-i-Panja, difficult though it is, than to cross the mountains. As far downstream as its junction with the Kyzyl-Su (37°36'N-69°25'E), the Āb-i-Panja continues to flow through steep-walled valleys that have almost no floodplains. In some places, the valleys are chasm-like for several miles (Figure 7); and the trail can follow the riverbed only at lowest water if at all.

c. Drainage

In the mountains of the high, rugged country of the east the drainage pattern is a network of perennial streams and small torrents. The fact that there are pamirs in the Corridor and apparently none in the big bend area indicates that the Corridor has a certain amount of standing surface water whereas the big bend has almost none. Particularly in summer when melt water is released, the pamirs are wet and in some places swampy. Chakmaktin Kol is merely a deeper and possibly marshy section within the Āq Su-Little Pamir River drainage divide. Lake Victoria is 12 miles long, 1 to 3 miles wide, and has no flowing surface outlet; but water probably seeps westward. The wet areas within 10 miles east and south of its eastern end may be swamps or lakes. North of Ishkashīm is glacier-fed Shiwa Lake,

*Many statements in this study are general or vague, not from choice but because of the highly unsatisfactory nature of statistical and map information. Afghanistan has practically no machinery for the systematic collection of data. •

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

which is nearly round and about 5 miles across; it drains into the Āb-i-Panja, 8 miles to the east. The surface is over 7,000 feet in elevation, and the lake is frozen nearly three-fourths of the year. One source credits it with an altitude of 11,000 feet and a depth of 100 feet. 5/ The fact that no other lakes are shown on available maps may well be due to the lack of exploration, especially in the big bend area. Everywhere, spring and early summer are the seasons of greatest water flow, and late summer and winter the time of low water. Travel is seriously hampered during May-July. Probably the ideal time for travel is September, a month of relatively low water before the snow and cold weather set in.



Figure 7. Looking due west down the Āb-i-Panja from above the right bank at 37°57'N-71°34'E. The river here is some 6,500 feet above sea level. The village of Rushan (Qala Wamar) lies 2 miles downstream on the right bank, hidden by the promontory at the right. The Bartang River, flowing southwestward, joins the Āb-i-Panja about a mile to the south (left of the camera). The latter changes its course from north to west-northwest at this confluence. Beyond the bend in the middle distance, the Āb-i-Panja flows west-southwest on a wide flat floor until it is again closely confined by steep banks about 8 miles downstream.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

2. Low Hills and Plains Between Kundūz and Daulatābād

As the Āb-i-Panja leaves the mountains near Samti and Chubek, it splits into two branches, which unite again in a single channel about 30 miles downstream (see Map 13685). Between the two branches is a crescent-shaped area of Afghan territory known as the Urta Tagai (Uzbek: "middle steppe" or possibly "central plain"). At this point the Āb-i-Panja, which from here westward is more commonly known as the Amu Darya,* begins to develop an appreciable flood plain and occasional meanders; mountains lie farther back from the river; temperature rises and aridity increases. Although much of the Urta Tagai is cultivated, parts of it are swampy; and farther downstream there may be relatively large swampy areas along the river. One such, north of Hazrat Imām (68°53'E), is ideal for duck hunting, and near Kuduk Toba (Tebe) at 68°15'E the river has twin reedy channels. From Hazrat Imām westward the whole valley is flat and sandy.

The Amu Darya floodplain increases in width to about 2 miles at Ayvadzh (Aiwanj: 36°58'N-68°03'E); and west of Pata Kesar it is as much as 10 miles wide in Afghanistan. Its southern margin is usually marked by 1 or 2 alluvial scarps 10 to 20 feet high, which separate it from the higher sand plain to the south. The sand plain may be of sandy clay, drift sand, or dunes interrupted by low hills. In width, it ranges from 2 miles in the east near Aiwanj to 20 miles in the west near Andkhūi, forming a real barrier to any land transportation that must cross it. Much of the sand plain is bounded fairly sharply on its southern margin by foothills that rise to elevations of 4,000 to 6,000 feet, but in the west the southern margin of the sand plain shades into a stony plain that extends in an east-west strip roughly from Andkhūi to the Kara Bil' Hills (Karabie' Upland) or about to the meridian of Daulatābād (36°30'N-65°E). Most of the sand plain has a surface of sandy clay or stream outwash gravels from the hills to the south. The stony plain has scattered sand dunes and salt pans as well as foothill outliers (see Map 10944).

The western part of this Low Hills and Plains region -- from Kelif to Daulatābād -- is the southeastern portion of the Kara Kum Desert. Most of the ground is bare because it is salty as well as dry. The meager vegetation consists of an occasional low bush and short, widely scattered grasses (Figures 8 and 9).

*Also known as the Oxus River.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



Figure 8. Looking east along the Afghan ring road between Balkh and Mazār-i-Sharīf. Foothills bordering the plain can be seen at the right.



Figure 9. A sandy trail through desert-edge vegetation north of Shibarghan, between Andkhūi ($36^{\circ}56'N-65^{\circ}08'E$) and Ālamlik ($37^{\circ}02'N-65^{\circ}56'E$). The tower in the distance is part of a military guard station.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

3. Foothills of the Northwestern Margins of the
Band-i-Turkestan and Paropamisus Range

From the vicinity of Daulatabad to the Iranian border, the strip of Afghanistan that lies north of the mountains is a narrow foothill belt, rather well dissected by stream valleys. In two places, it narrows considerably -- where the Band-i-Turkestan and Paropamisus Ranges thrust westward as spurs from the main mass of the Hindu Kush. Both spurs contain considerable areas above 10,000 feet and in each the 7,000-foot contour (chosen arbitrarily) comes within 30 miles of the irregular border with the USSR, which averages about 2,500 feet.

A drainage divide more than 3,000 feet high extends from the Band-i-Turkestan northward to the border near 64°E and separates the northeast flowing Ram Gul Tagao, which dries up in the desert near Andkhui, from the west flowing Chichaktu Shor. This area north of the Band-i-Turkestan is fairly rough country -- the stream pattern is dense and most of the streams are perennial, some even unfordable during spring flood. Foot trails generally follow the valleys, whereas the vehicle road west of Maimana cuts directly across the grain of the terrain in several places. Parts of the major stream valleys may be bordered by brush and tamarisk thickets. Elsewhere the characteristic cover consists of grass tussocks separated by several feet of bare ground. Only during the spring rainy season is there a continuous cover of grasses and shrubs.

Between the two spurs the area is drained by the west-flowing Murghab River, which cuts north through the western tip of the Band-i-Turkestan; it picks up the Chichaktu Shor in Afghanistan and the Kashan (Koshan Rud) and Kushka (Kushk Rud) rivers in Turkmenistan and then flows north to water the Mary oasis. South of the Paropamisus Range the Hari Rud flows westward, curves northward around the range to the Iranian border, and continues into Turkmenistan as the Tedzhen River. Outliers from the western end of the Paropamisus Range turn north to the Turkmen border just east of the Iranian border and divide Kushka drainage on the east from Hari on the west.

From the Murghab River to the Iranian border the lower parts of the foothills near the USSR and Iranian borders are somewhat less rough than those farther east, but the terrain is more varied. Most of the land consists of hills and low mountains, with no broad level expanses (Figures 10 and 11). Between the Murghab and Kushka Rivers, stream erosion has carved fairly steep-sided gullies, which are much easier to follow on foot than to cross. In Afghanistan the Murghab is a river of considerable size, carrying a large quantity of water even during the summer dry period; but the Kashan and Kushka are little more than headwater streams until after they cross the border.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



Figure 10. A part of the Afghan ring road in the narrow valley of the Murghāb River a few miles south of Bala Murghāb.



Figure 11. The main road from Herāt to Qala Nau crosses the narrow plain south of the Paropamisus Range about 20 miles northeast of Herāt.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

The land between the Kushka River and the northward curve of the Paropamisus Range along the Hari Rūd (Tedzhen River) is topographically the least formidable area west of Daulatābād. Hills are lower than to the east and west. Some of them have relatively flat summits and are separated by flat-bottomed depressions -- both these features increasing in size toward the north as the general elevation becomes lower. Because slopes are sufficiently gentle, many of the trails cut directly across the hills.

Just east of the Iranian border is somewhat rougher country, comparable to the Kushka-Murghāb area. North of 35°N it is characterized by foothill ridges -- outliers of the Paropamisus -- of which 4 run northwestward across the Iranian border and another 2 curve northward into Turkmenistan. South of 35°, around Kohsān (34°39'N) and Ghuriān (34°20'N), the valley of the Hari Rūd is broader and the country considerably more open.

Like the rough land east of the Murghāb, the country to the west of it supports trees only in riverine thickets and other places where the soil is moist enough and not too saline. Distinctive features not found east of the Murghāb are the occasional pistachio groves. The bushy trees grow in open stands on hillside slopes, producing a somewhat park-like appearance. Elsewhere low shrubs and grasses provide an almost continuous cover during the spring wet season but dry out and expose much bare ground the rest of the year.

C. Roads

The existence of relatively reliable information on vehicle routes in northern Afghanistan is one of the brighter spots in the intelligence picture and makes possible the following analysis. In it no attempt has been made to duplicate the detailed information on base, surface, width, condition and trafficability that is available in NIS 34, Afghanistan. 6/ In fact such information is largely academic for this area. The essential facts about roads in northern Afghanistan are:

- (1) All are dirt or gravel, none is paved.
- (2) Most surfaces are very poor, permitting average speeds of 10 to 20 miles per hour, although certain spots are good enough for 40 miles per hour.
- (3) Irrigation ditches are cut across roads promiscuously, creating small fords.
- (4) Mountain roads are tortuous and dangerous.
- (5) On the plains, off-road travel is possible in much of the area and may be better than on the road itself (Figure 12).

S-E-C-R-E-T



Figure 12. The poor state of repair of most roads often forces travelers to use the off-road natural surface. This picture was taken a few miles east of Ankhūi.

The principal travel route in northern Afghanistan is along that part of the Afghan ring road lying between Herāt and Kundūz, and an eastward spur from Kundūz to Faizābād (see Map 10944). West of Kundūz there are several tracks and stretches of open country where properly equipped vehicles can travel north from the ring road to the border. Wheeled vehicles can cut southward through the Hindu Kush only along the Bāghlān-Doshi-Shikāri-Ghorband-Jabal us Sirāj-Kabul route; but pack animals can enter the mountain mass from several points on the ring road; east of Faizābād, they are the principal means of transport.

Much of the discussion of the Corridor and Badakshān, in Section II-B, Terrain and Vegetation, is concerned with travel routes. Apparently it was once possible to jeep as far east as Qala Panja in the Corridor, and portions of the Ishkāshīm-Qala Panja route may still be jeepable (see Figure 6), but now the western approaches to Ishkāshīm (via Zebak) do not permit vehicle entry. While the route from Ishkāshīm north along the Āb-i-Panja is probably truckable on the Soviet side, the comparable route on the Afghan side is assumed to be no more than a pack trail.

Reports 7/ that have been received indicate the Soviets have bridged the Āb-i-Panja at more than one place in the Corridor and are planning bridges at others. Such reports are believed to be untrue or exaggerated. Although Soviet garrisons 8/ of some strength are certainly located along the river and occasional "practice" crossings have probably been made, a permanent bridge structure is thought not to exist.

S-E-C-R-E-T

D. Climate

For a country that has been so little surveyed as Afghanistan, a remarkably good account of the climate is found in NIS 34 Section 23: Weather and Climate. 9/ Therefore, the following paragraphs include only a few basic points that would be significant to a person on the ground.

Northern Afghanistan is essentially a dry region. On the east is the high, cold steppe-desert of Eastern and Western Pamir in Tadzhik SSR, north of the Wakhan Corridor. On the west is a low, warm, true desert that extends westward into Iran. The area between them is transitional in temperature and elevation and has slightly more precipitation than either zone, but it is still a dry region.

The eastern part of northern Afghanistan is higher -- all the Corridor is above 8,500 feet in elevation -- and therefore cooler than the west. Winters in the east are cold and snowy, sometimes to the point of precluding all travel, whereas the west may have infrequent light snow and several consecutive days without frost. Summers are rather rough in the west, as in any low-elevation desert (Figure 13); but in the east midday shade is comfortable, and night brings an occasional frost. Rain and snow (Figure 14) fall chiefly during the period from midwinter through spring -- January through April -- and then the snow begins to melt, making May to July the wettest time of year underfoot. Many fords are impassable and roads and bridges are washed out in June.

Throughout northern Afghanistan, summer nights are considerably cooler than the days, but both have fairly consistent or uniform temperatures from day to day. Winter weather is variable, as it is in New York or Chicago, with irregular periods of cold and milder temperatures. Winter skies are clouded about half the time; summer skies are much clearer. Thunder may be heard in spring and summer, but not all thunderstorms produce rain that reaches the ground. Winds are stronger than most Americans are accustomed to, often reaching gale force in winter.

III. The People

A. General Characteristics of the Population

Westerners generally have the impression that most of the Afghan people are thin, dirty, diseased, clothed in near rags, and uneducated. By Western standards this is true, and it has been true for centuries, but the common man has learned to compensate for his primitive existence by taking a keen interest in new things and new people, a

S-E-C-R-E-T



Figure 13. Extreme aridity is the rule in the low plains of northwestern Afghanistan. The tower is a part of the military guard station shown in the distance in Figure 9.



Figure 14. November snow cover on the trail from Faizābād northwest to the Āb-i-Panja.

S-E-C-R-E-T

willingness to set aside worries and to change his mind frequently, and above all by an uncompromising hospitality toward strangers. He is a well tanned outdoor man who herds animals or scratches the ground to raise crops, is unable to plan for the future or accumulate capital, and leads what we would consider a hard life at the subsistence level. His education has probably been achieved through experience and parental instruction, with possibly a few weeks of formal elementary schooling when there was enough money and impetus to support a local teacher. No more than one school age child in 30 receives any classroom education, and the outlay for him is about \$15 per year. The effect of a naturally high birth rate is offset by a high death rate, and efficiency is reduced by tuberculosis, malaria, pneumonia, and eye diseases.

Opportunity for contact with people and ideas outside the small community is meager. Word of mouth is probably the most common means of receiving news, which is richer near the caravan or bus routes. In the village, a newspaper may sometimes be available for the literate to read and the illiterate to hear. Kabul broadcasts Government propaganda, Government news gleaned from the newspapers, and religious speeches of prominent mullahs. Although these broadcasts can be heard throughout the country, the only large audience is the urban middle class, which resides chiefly in Kabul but also in small numbers in Mazār-i-Sharīf, Herāt, and other towns. For others the high initial cost, absence of electricity, and nuisance of batteries make owning a radio nearly impossible; and communal listening is not popular. German and Dutch sets are the more popular in the country as a whole, but it is estimated that well over half the receivers north of the Hindu Kush are of USSR manufacture. Soviet and Indian broadcasts heard in Afghanistan are more valued for their music than for their propaganda.

The total population of northern Afghanistan is probably between 2 and 3 million people. Their location is determined primarily by the presence of water and secondarily by the presence of land suitable for grazing or cropping. All towns, villages, and riverine settlements in northern Afghanistan are basically oases. They are relatively larger in the west, where there are a few full-fledged "towns", and smaller in the mountainous east where settlements of one to twenty houses are common (see Map 10944). Although the population between oasis-towns is sparse, people will be encountered in the plains areas -- usually moving about between the main road and the river or staying overnight in the rabats.

Most of the people -- probably in the neighborhood of 90 percent -- are peasants. They may be sedentary village farmers who have settled where there is water enough for irrigation, seminomads who practice

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

lowland agriculture in winter and migrate up the mountains to take advantage of high summer pastures, or full-time nomads dependent on sheep and goats (Figure 15). A village or town is not completely

Figure 15. A rugged Tajik in the western part of the Wakhan Corridor. At 9,000 feet, he carries more than his weight of winter rye.



urban but is made up of an outer fringe of irrigated farmland that feeds the farmer and the nonfarming urbanites. Service and professional people, government employees, and well-to-do persons comprise a small but important segment of the population, probably less than ten percent. The predominantly peasant population lives in small villages; the Quarter-Inch map series contains literally many hundreds of place-names. Possibly 300,000 of the people of northern Afghanistan live in towns of 5,000 or larger (Figures 16 and 17). The following list includes the principal towns of the area and also indicates the wide range in estimates of their population.

<u>Town</u>	<u>Population</u> (in 1,000's)	<u>Town</u>	<u>Population</u> (in 1,000's)
Āq Chāh	3-20	Kundūz	10-20
Andkhūi	5-30	Kwāja Imām Saiyid	-10
Bāghlān	10-18	Maimana	10-25
Bāla Murghāb	3-8	Mazār-i-Sharīf	30-55
Balkh	10-20	Pul-i-Khumri	8-15
Faizābād	4-25	Rustāk	10-20
Haibak	10-20	Sari-i-Pul	5-20
Hazrat Imām	-10	Shibarghan	2-20
Herāt	30-85	Tāliqān	10-20
Ishkāshīm	-2	Tāshkurghān	-20
Khānābād	15-30	Wakhan Corridor (The)	-1
		Totals	175-494

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



Figure 16. A street in Faizābād, a largely Tajik town of some 20,000 people. The two men in sun helmets are westerners.



Figure 17. Main street in Mazār-i-Sharīf.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

B. Ethnic Groups

The people of northern Afghanistan fall into three major ethnic groups and a number of smaller ones. Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen predominate in the area extending from the central Corridor to the Murghāb-Kushka Rivers. Kirghiz dominate the eastern Wakhan Corridor. In southern Mazar and Kataghan Provinces, south of the Uzbeks, are the Hazaras. The Chahar Aimak live in the extreme west, south and west of the Turkmen. Scattered throughout the north are many Pathans, transplanted from southern Afghanistan. In the following paragraphs, the ethnic groups are discussed from east to west, following the pattern used in Section II, Physical Background.

1. Kirghiz

All the Kirghiz in Afghanistan -- somewhat less than 1,000 -- live in the Wakhan Corridor. Most of them live in the eastern half -- in the area that is east of Sarhad-i-Wākhan (73°30'E) on the Āb-i-Wākhan, in the area east of approximately 73°00' on the Pamir River that includes the Lake Victoria region. The southern mountain rim of the Corridor and the mountain chain in the northeast are little known and probably almost uninhabited. The Kirghiz are thoroughly Mongolian, short of stature, with dark yellow skin and sparse beard. The eastern half of the Corridor is a transborder extension of the main tribal area in the Kirgiz SSR and Sinkiang. Typically horse-loving nomads, completely dependent on yaks, sheep, and goats, they cross borders at will to trade, raid, and pasture their animals. Their largest village is Bozai Gumbaz (pronounced Box-eye Gumbaz).

2. Tajiks

Tajiks are the dominant group in (1) the western half of the Corridor, (2) a narrow strip west of the Āb-i-Panja between Ishkāshīm and Rushan, and (3) southern Badakshān and southeastern Kataghan Provinces. They are also present in smaller percentages in several other parts of northern Afghanistan, such as (1) the area between Mazār-i-Sharīf and Tāshkurghān, (2) a strip 100 miles long south of Sar-i-Pul, and (3) the town of Herāt and the land to the east of it. It is significant that Tajiks also inhabit parts of the USSR that are adjacent to Afghanistan from the middle of the Corridor to the Urta Tagai (69°20'E).

The Tajiks are usually tall and good looking, with olive skin, straight noses and full black beards (Figure 18). Although openly antagonistic to the central government and therefore excluded from the higher military and administrative positions, they are a solid, orderly group of farmers, traders, and artisans. The language, called Tajik, is a Persian dialect similar to the Afghan dialect of Persian. Soviet propaganda probably has had little effect on these people.

- 25 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T



Figure 18. With one exception, all of this group at Tala Barfaq are Tajiks. The man at the extreme left comes from Kabul, about 80 miles to the southeast.

3. Uzbeks

About one million Uzbeks live in Afghanistan, all of them in the north. The solid center of northern Afghanistan is occupied by Uzbeks. Toward the east, they inhabit all of northern Badakshān except for the narrow strip of Tajik territory along the Āb-i-Panja between Ishkāshīm and the Soviet town of Rushan. Toward the west, they occupy the plain-and-hill area between the Amu Darya and the Hindu Kush as well as the Band-i-Turkestan. Between 64° and 67°E (western Maimana Province), the Uzbeks are not dominant in the area near the USSR border, which is Turkmen territory.

The Afghan Uzbeks are closely related to the people of the same name across the Amu Darya in the USSR and are largely, but not wholly, Mongoloid. They retain the Mongoloid eyefold and scant beard, but they are taller and have a complexion of reddish-tinge. Most of the Uzbeks are sedentary, raising cotton and karakul and breeding horses.

4. Turkmen

Smallest of the three principal frontier groups, the Turkmen live in a narrow band parallel to the USSR border from 63° to 67°E. They also inhabit an extensive area north of the border and west of the Amu Darya. The moderately tall slender figure and light yellowish

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

or reddish skin mark them as Caucasoid. Compared with the relatively peaceful Uzbeks, they are a restive people; and they probably dislike the Russian government as much as the Afghan. They number upwards of 100,000.

A combination of farming and nomadic herding provides a livelihood for most of these people. Fields around their permanent villages are planted to cereals in spring and are often unirrigated. In summer, all but a few of the Turkmen accompany their flocks to better pastures in the hills, returning in the fall when the lowland pastures revive.

5. Hazaras

Most of the Hazaras who leave their core area in the central Hindu Kush go eastward, especially to Kabul; but a few move north into Afghan Turkestan. Along the Iranian border from Islam Qala southward and around the town of Qala Nau in northern Herāt Province, the Hazaras total perhaps 50,000.

The Hazaras are true Mongoloids. Taciturn but sturdy and relatively reliable, they are sedentary farmers who thoroughly dislike the central government, preferring to be let alone.

6. Chahar Aimak

The Chahar Aimak comprise an indefinite group, estimated at 350,000 people, who live on both sides of the USSR border for a distance of 100 miles east of Iran and in an area including most of southeastern Herāt Province and extreme northwest Kandahār Province. Some are nomads and others farmers. The Chahar Aimak face is round, and the hair is plentiful and black.

7. Pathans

The Pathans are the ruling tribal group in Afghanistan and most of them live in the southern part of the country. For political reasons, some 100,000 families of Pathans have been resettled in northern Afghanistan, where they constitute a politically reliable element in a sea of Soviet-connected Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Turkmen. The largest area of Pathan concentration is between Bāghlān and Doshi. In north central Mazār-i-Sharīf Province are several small scattered concentrations and east of Herāt is a rather considerable area in which they are intermingled with Tajiks.

Pathans are a rather impressive looking Caucasoid people -- tall with black to light-brown hair, and rather light-colored skin.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

C. Soviet Penetration

With the exception of the Pathans, the peoples of northern Afghanistan, particularly the Uzbeks, are reported to be highly susceptible to Soviet overtures. They do not lean toward Communism as such, but they have close ethnic and cultural connections with people north of the border. This, combined with an inadequate system of checks and identification in Afghanistan, have made the initial stages of Soviet penetration relatively easy. The deeply seated, though seldom violent, resentment of the native northern Afghans against their local Pathan rulers and the Kabul Government provides a continuous entree which the USSR can ill afford to neglect. Radio Tashkent still beams southward in Uzbek, which many Afghans understand. The influx of technicians since 1954 has provided a highly mobile source of Soviet influence in the area.

IV. Economic Activity

A. General

Between 80 and 90 percent of the people of northern Afghanistan are supported by or engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. About half of Afghanistan's cultivated area, or about 2 percent of the total area of the country lies between the Hindu Kush and the Amu Darya. Some of the crops -- perhaps less than half -- are grown without irrigation. All crops are grown on small plots and, except for export cotton, are used in the home or for local sale as a cash crop. Animal husbandry ranges in importance from the few animals kept by a completely sedentary family, through semi-nomadism (Figure 19), to a small number of completely nomadic herders. Karakul is raised chiefly by large-scale methods and is exported.



Figure 19. Yaks being milked at a temporary Kirghiz camp near Bozai Gumbaz in the eastern Corridor.

S-E-C-R-E-T

B. Agriculture

The steppe climate of the lowlands and foothills north of the Hindu Kush is well adapted to the raising of grains, fruits, vegetables, and cotton. Winter wheat is the favorite grain, followed in importance by corn, rice, and barley. Sorghums are used largely for fodder. Grapes, peaches, plums, apples, melons, other fruits, and nuts are prominent crops. Most of the vegetables familiar to an American are grown in Afghanistan. All of these crops are consumed locally except for some nuts and a small part of the fruit crop that is exported to neighboring countries, either fresh or dried. Northern Kataghan and Mazar-i-Sharif Provinces produce nearly all the cotton of the country and a large part of this is exported, chiefly to USSR. Herat and Badakhshan raise opium, which is used locally and exported by both smuggling and legal channels. The opium acreage is increasing under government urging.

C. Livestock

Animals are perhaps three times as numerous as people in the country as a whole, and in northern Afghanistan the ratio may be even higher. Sheep and goats make up the bulk of the animal population. Horses, mules, donkeys, and camels are raised in small numbers as beasts of burden. All except the karakul are used locally as food, draft animals, and sources of cloth or leather. The formerly profitable business of raising and exporting karakul skins is limited exclusively to northern Afghanistan, particularly between Andkhui and Mazar-i-Sharif. Most of the skins are for export to the United States, but since 1950 this demand has fallen off -- giving USSR an opportunity to pick up the surplus. Since most of the karakul is raised by herders who have invested considerable capital in large specialized herds, the cutback in production has resulted in hardship. Furthermore, sale to the USSR rather than the United States results in a loss of dollar income.

D. Processing

Insofar as the term can be applied to northern Afghanistan, industry is located in the valley of the Kunduz River. A factory for producing sugar from beets is located in Baghlan and operates at little better than half capacity for lack of beets. Cotton is ginned locally, and some of it is manufactured into coarse cloth at a factory in Pul-i-Khumri -- both these operations being largely government controlled. The gin at Kunduz also processes cottonseed into oil and soap. Some of the ordinary wool is used by the Herat carpet factory and some is exported to USSR, but probably more than half is woven into clothing in the home. Many of the villages have the usual small pottery-making establishment and a small forge using scrap metal. Practically all other processing is done in the home

for home or local use, but some of the home weaving of cotton, wool, and silk constitutes a cottage textile industry.

A major deterrent to the development of industrial activity is the lack of fuel. Coal mines at Ishpushta and Kar Kar (Karkar) fall short of supplying even present requirements, and wood is extremely scarce for both lumber and fuel. For this reason the discovery of oil at Sar-i-Pul in November 1956 appears to the Afghans to be of particular significance, even though the oil is of poor quality. Further drilling in the area is continuing under Soviet direction, chiefly for its political impact. With poor transportation and no nearby refinery, this oil is no panacea for the economic ills of the country.

E. Changes in the Economic Scene

The interplay of Soviet and Western forces striving for the affection of Afghanistan is resulting in forced-draft development in an economy that has heretofore been geared largely to primitive conditions. In northern Afghanistan the impetus is mainly Soviet (Figure 20) and the high wages offered have caused a certain amount



Figure 20. Soviet-built oil tank farm at Herat, 1955.

of disruption in existing establishments such as the Pul-i-Khumri textile mill, which has experienced difficulty in hiring people who have the required technical background. The ordinary peasant is little affected, but a few people who are employed on foreign-sponsored projects have more purchasing power than they are accustomed to.

S-E-C-R-E-T

A port of sorts is being developed at Qizil Qala on the Āb-i-Panja, and the road to it from Kundūz is being improved. To accommodate jet planes, a new airfield has been built at Mazār-i-Sharīf, and Afghan would-be pilots are receiving instruction from Russian pilots in Soviet-built jet planes.

Soviet interest in Afghan agriculture is reflected in the earmarking of approximately 40 million dollars of the 100 million dollar credit established by the USSR for agricultural development, including irrigation projects in the north.

Early in 1958, additional evidence of stepped-up Soviet interest in northern Afghanistan became available. A petroleum agreement that calls for a 7-stage exploration program involving 470 Soviet and Soviet Bloc technicians and a geological survey that will include aerial photography was reportedly signed on 7 January 1958. The cost of materials and equipment for this petroleum program is said to be approximately 8 million dollars, and is a sum over and above the 100 million dollar credit previously established. 10/ Earlier reports indicate that the total petroleum loan may be as high as 15 million dollars.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

APPENDIX A

GAPS IN INTELLIGENCE

Serious gaps in intelligence data were encountered in preparing every part of this study. For example, available intelligence reports pertinent to the physical and economic geography of the country indicate a general lack of first-hand observation of the landscape. In the past, reports from occasional observers in northern Afghanistan lacked detail primarily because travelers seldom left the main routes. In recent years, the opportunity to travel in this part of Afghanistan has been sharply restricted, thus making detailed information even harder to get. Nor could the lack of detailed first-hand information be remedied by available statistical data, since the statistics are often inadequate and sometimes misleading.

Neither maps nor photographs can begin to bridge the deep gaps in information adequately. The basic map series covering northern Afghanistan is hopelessly out of date; the newest map series including part of the area duplicates many of the blank spaces that appeared on earlier maps. Most photographs of the area lack proper identification for intelligence purposes.

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

APPENDIX B

SOURCE REFERENCES

A wide variety of types of information went into this study. Available maps and photographs were used to supplement the observations found in many of the intelligence reports. Intelligence documents from several services or agencies -- chiefly the Army, Air Force, CIA, and ICA -- were utilized. Information was also derived from the National Intelligence Survey (NIS) of Afghanistan.

Evaluations following the classification entry are those appearing on the cited documents and have the following significance:

<u>Source of Information</u>	<u>Information</u>
A - Completely reliable	1 - Confirmed by other sources
B - Usually reliable	2 - Probably true
C - Fairly reliable	3 - Possibly true
D - Not usually reliable	4 - Doubtful
E - Not reliable	5 - Probably false
F - Cannot be judged	6 - Cannot be judged

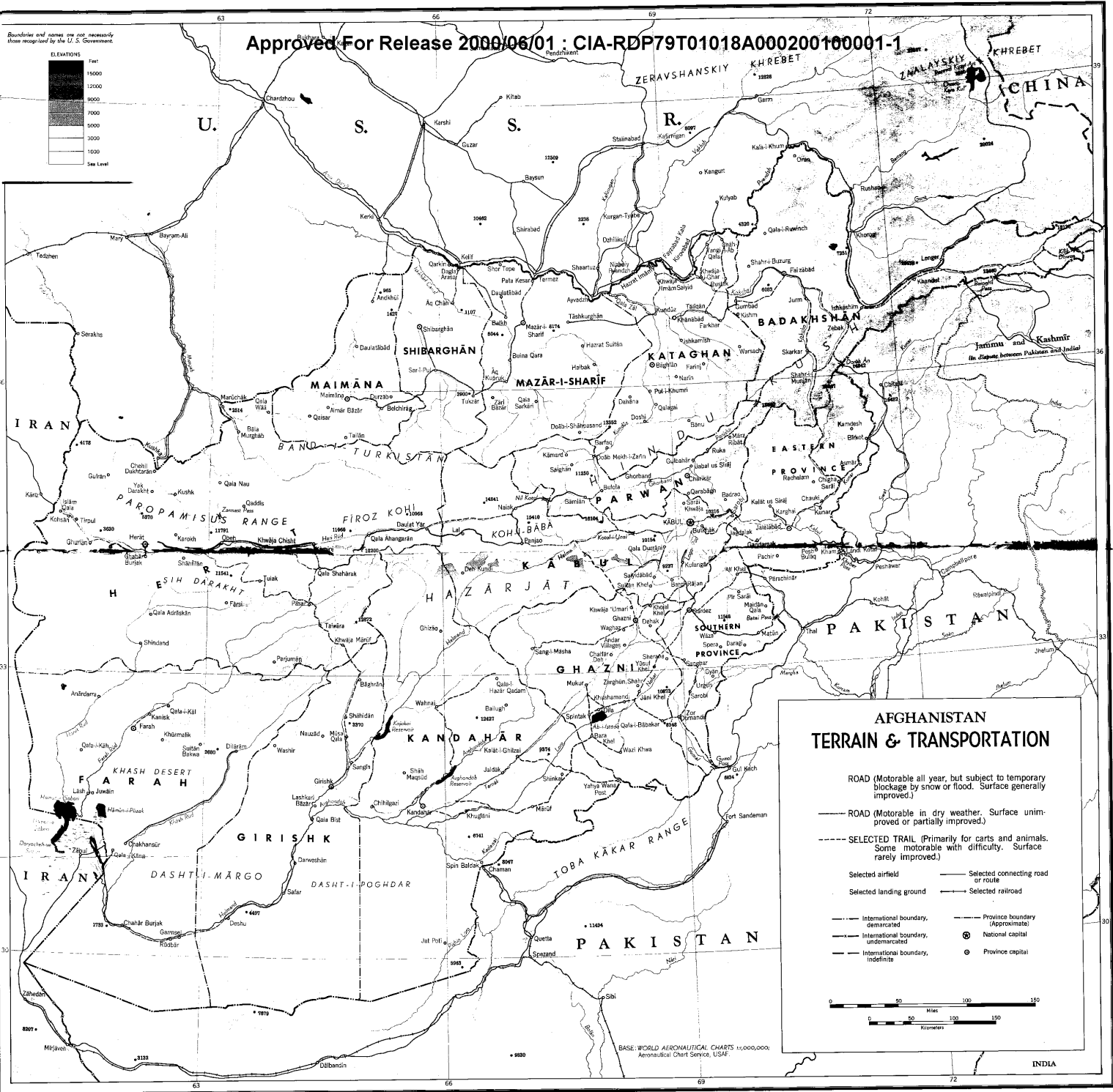
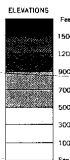
S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

1. State, Kabul. 284, 5 Nov 57, Discussion of Fairchild Geneva Representative with Afghan Government Officials, 5 p. C.
2. Army, Kabul. R-20-49, 28 Jan 49, Maps of the USSR-Afghanistan Border, p. 3, info 27 Jan 49, S. Eval A-2.
3. Army, Kabul. R-121-46, 14 Oct 46, Afghan-USSR Border, p. 1-35, IG 6101.0101, S. Eval A-2.
4. United Nations. United Nations Treaty Series, 1949, vol 31, no. 476, "Frontier Agreement Between Afghanistan and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Signed at Moscow on 13 June 1946." p. 158-167. U.
- 25X1A 5. [REDACTED]
6. CIA. National Intelligence Survey: Afghanistan, NIS 34, sec 32, "Highways," C.
7. [REDACTED] 25X1A
8. [REDACTED]
9. CIA. National Intelligence Survey: Afghanistan, NIS 34, sec 23, "Weather and Climate," C.
10. State, Kabul. Dsp 513, 8 Mar 58, Soviet-assisted Oil Exploration Plan, C.

S-E-C-R-E-T

Boundaries and names are not necessarily those recognized by the U.S. Government.



AFGHANISTAN TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

ROAD (Motorable all year, but subject to temporary blockage by snow or flood. Surface generally improved.)

ROAD (Motorable in dry weather. Surface unimproved or partially improved.)

SELECTED TRAIL (Primarily for carts and animals. Some motorable with difficulty. Surface rarely improved.)

Selected airfield

Selected landing ground

Selected connecting road or route

Selected railroad

International boundary, demarcated

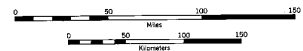
International boundary, undemarcated

International boundary, indefinite

Province boundary (Approximate)

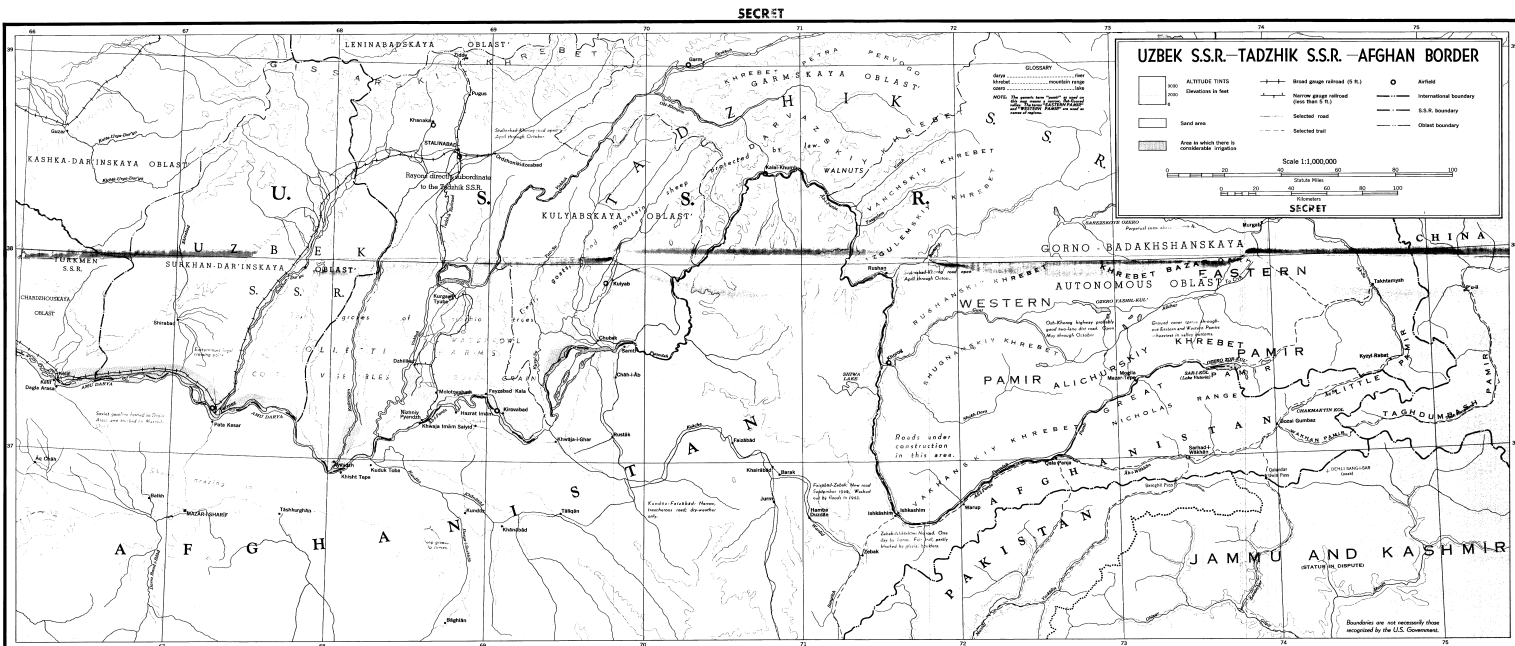
National capital

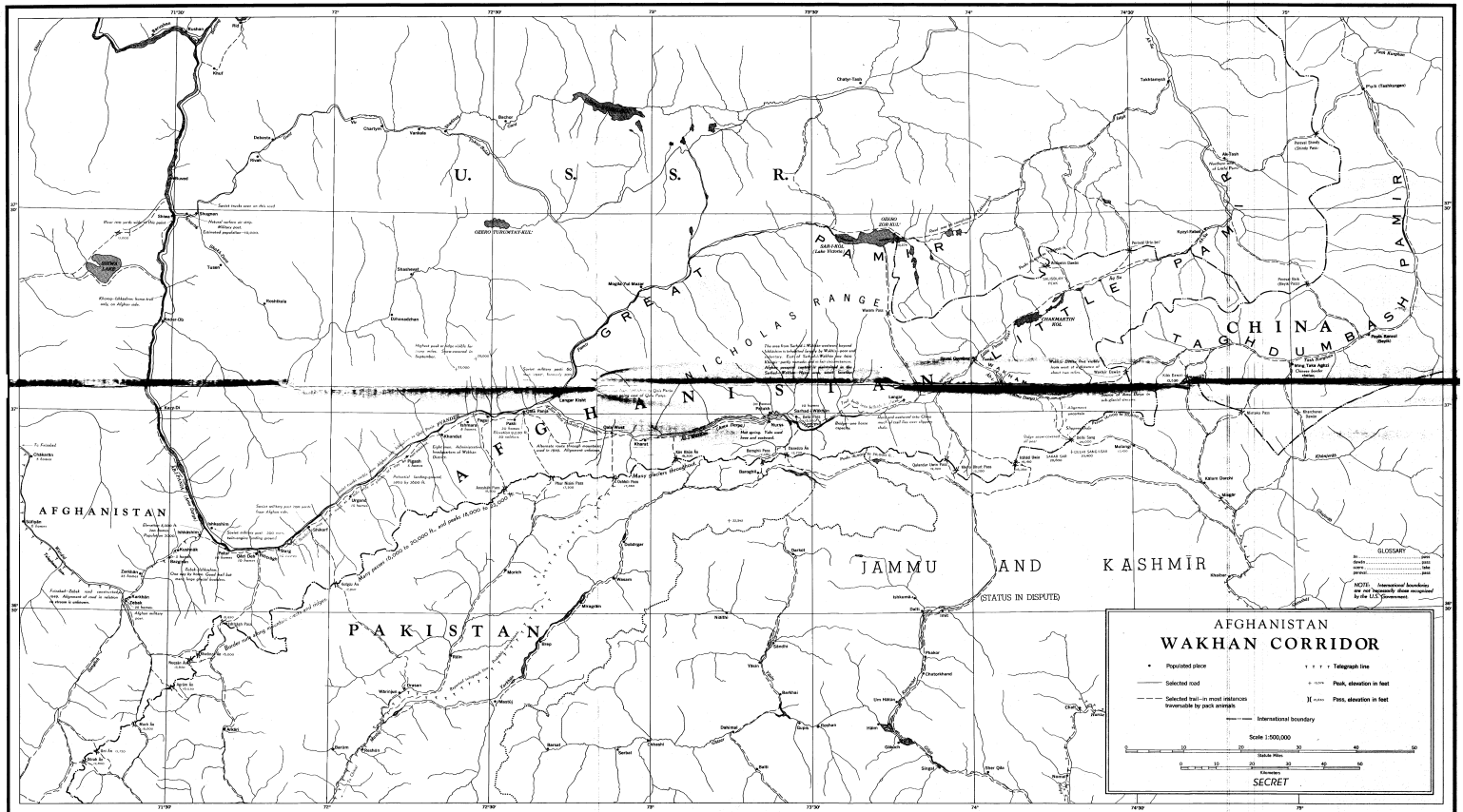
Province capital



BASE: WORLD AERONAUTICAL CHARTS 1:100,000,000
Aeronautical Chart Service, USAF

Approved For Release 2000/06/01 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000200100001-1





Approved For Release 2000/06/01 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000200100001-1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

NOFORN

NOFORN

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Approved For Release 2000/06/01 : CIA-RDP79T01018A000200100001-1